



November 7, 2024 | 9:00-10:30 AM

Meeting Minutes – Community Resource Hubs Public Meeting

Link to Recording:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/EpR5chb4abHawnWBiN1TvJBTtECIEzFTZErtwXYPeiOo26fGwkuLAzNVN2LRzRia.p1_XQJJl3z9braSi

Attendance

Virtual Attendees: full list of registrants is at the end of the document

Presenters: Sarah Huang, Joseph Dickerson, Annie Decker, Peggy Diaz, Andrew Hoskins

Opening Remarks

Facilitator welcomed participants, introduced DEEP representatives, and outlined the meeting's purpose/agenda, and Zoom functions.

Presentation

Facilitator provided a high-level overview of the Community Resource Hubs, including its focus on environmental justice communities. The presentation then covered the scope of expectations and how there are five major areas that hubs are expected to provide. Then went over organizational eligibility requirements (lead vs. Partner entities) and encouraged collaborative approaches with other local organizations to enhance service delivery. Described the two funding types (base and program specific) available to Hubs and highlighted key contracting expectations, familiarity with state and federal funding, subcontracting expectations, and management of fiscal responsibility, including requirements for subcontracting and partnerships. Explained the documentation needed for proposal submission, including budget details and partner information. Described the evaluation criteria, focusing on factors such as service delivery, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with DEEP's mission. Before moving to a DEEP facilitated Q&A Session they shared key dates and milestones. While doing this recap on the RFQ timeline they emphasized the public comment period, submission deadlines, and expected notification dates.

Public Comment

Andrew Ely asked when DEEP says that an organization must be in or near the EJ community it serves, what about non-profit organizations that can bring programs to communities? Sarah Huang (CT DEEP) provided clarification about how DEEP wants to make sure these hubs are both based in community and reflective of the community they serve. The proposal questions aim to ask the applicant to learn more about their relationship with their community.

Sarah acknowledged the funding questions in the chat around whether funding is awarded up front. Andrew Hoskins (CT DEEP) shared how DEEP does contracts on a reimbursement basis. He then added how there are rare exceptions where front payments are made but that would be part of the negotiation. While DEEP most likely will not do up-front payments for the entire award, they can look into. Additionally, will consider the frequency of reimbursements to ensure no hardship is caused on the organization.

Andrew Hoskins responded to another public comment around availability of hubs across the state. He explained how the initiative was born out of a great need and how they do not have any new state funding identified to support. As such, they looking to support the hubs with existing resources. They will have 1-2 hubs around the state and would be looking into entering multiyear agreements with the participating organizations. The goal is to be able to plug in different funding sources as they become available which is why they are keeping it as open ended as possible.

Maybeth Morales-Davis asked who is part of their grant application evaluation teams and whether there are EJ community members involved in this process? Sarah Huang replied by sharing how they have been talking about this internally to see what it looks like. Usually the process involves a conflict-of-interest form. Sarah said it would be helpful if Maybeth could expand on who they would be looking for serving on the evaluation team and what that rule can look like.

Ebone Lockett made a comment about how larger organizations with resources can prove things on financial and legislative basis. People who are doing the work every day cannot meet those qualifications. What she is looking at in the framework is if they can have a requirement for more than one organization. On the criteria of who eligible organizations are the lead statutory is required to include others and in particularly community organization. Andrew Hoskins emphasized how this is a draft RFQ and how her comment can be helpful in figuring out if there are exclusionary pieces in here that are unintended or unforeseen on DEEP's part. They are trying to build the table collaboratively with the draft and meetings.

Ebone then addressed the timeline and how the deadline is going to be a huge lift for organizations that are trying to get people through the day. Ebone emphasized the importance of coming together to co-create. Sarah shared how they followed the standard RFQ process used by DEEP and then asked for recommendations for what can help alleviate the lift. They shared recommendations such as helping decrease barriers, ensuring the weighing of applicants equitably, and leveling out the playing field. Ebone then stated that if DEEP knows an applicant does this work and partners with an organization that has everything in order that should be a bonus.

Doreen Abubakar suggested DEEP think about adding a way that the organizations that have it together can look for people like their organization which connects people to natural resources and are engaging in grassroot work. Proposed the idea of awarding extra points to organizations that

seek that out. Doreen made a comment about how bigger organizations think they have all the answers and have no reason to connect with smaller organizations causing them to seek out organizations on their level. Doreen thinks DEEP should require the larger organizations to seek out smaller organizations in specific areas. That way the smaller organization will have the opportunity to learn and expand their skillsets based on their work with the larger organization. Doreen shared how smaller organizations should be included at the beginning of the planning process or at least the larger organization saying they are partners and having them map out that process. Would like this effort to create smaller, community-based projects.

Sarah Huang asked Doreen if there is anything else within the evaluation process that would be helpful for DEEP to determine the strength of those partnerships? Doreen suggested adding how an organization must support a smaller organization and provided examples for how this can be achieved. For example, seeing what projects smaller organizations are already doing or want to do and then having the larger organization provide funding. Doreen shared how despite their experience getting a state grant, they could not do this application themselves. Instead, it would be helpful for them to write what they do and ask a larger nonprofit if they can have their community project be on a smaller nonprofit. Ebone shared how support letters and explanations of ways larger organizations have supported smaller organization should be a part of the demonstration of a deep relationship.

Anstress Farwell asked how much money will be distributed per year to the hubs? Andrew Hoskins said this will depend on the services respondents are able to offer. If they can offer everything on the list, they went over in the presentation and if there is eligible federal or state dollars it can be a larger amount in the range of hundreds of thousands of dollars. He wants to leave the door open for smaller organizations. As future funding becomes available, they want to be able to inject that funding into the hubs to do some of the outreach, education, and other requirements. Anstress said it might be good for DEEP when looking at this to see the percentage that an organization will have to be spending. You get a bigger bang for your buck if it is a larger grant. What is most important is to open opportunity for people to get involved and really set the table. You need a plan that address major issues in communities. Focus on how to get meaningful grants to small grassroots organizations designed for what they can manage and help get them off the starting block themselves.

Angela from Phillips Health Ministry asked for clarification around the requirement referencing office space for personnel. Joseph shared how they are asking for people to have physical location so they can have DEEP staff that can have a face and get to know the community. The hubs can be a space where DEEP staff can be called in for office hours by the organization who may have a person that needs guidance on a DEEP program.

Kathy Fay shared their thoughts on how the hub should consist of a cluster of smaller organizations where one of them has a meeting space but does not serve as a hub completely on their own. This approach would be helpful to DEEP when getting the word out about programming across the state. Joseph shared how some of the network concept is reflected in the partnership concepts.

Ebone Lockett explained how while there is a static building it would be great for members of that organization to go out in the communities to ensure their visibility is seen and felt beyond the walls of the building. Ebone wants deep relationships with front line communities that are feeling the brunt. They brought up the historical flooding issue in Hartford and how local communities

experience it but never felt like they had an opportunity to address the issue which is where the hub can serve in this manner.

Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig made a comment about scope and how the way it is written does not seem to include disaster preparedness or climate resilience. Joseph Dickerson said Kristin's comment is spot on and there is a big need for helping communities in moments of crisis. He acknowledged and recognized how the places that feel the impacts of climate change and struggle to recover are mostly EJ communities. Joseph clarified how there is a resilience hub model but wanted to make these hubs more expansive which is why they focused more on the work DEEP does and making the state safer and cleaner. Not to say that a resilience hub is not an aspect but instead they did not call that out since they wanted to focus on the other concepts. Sarah Huang said it would be helpful to get comments from her in a written format.

Annie Decker highlighted a question that was made about sub-grants after the awarding and how DEEP is contemplating that as opposed to partners. Not thinking about grant making function of lead organization but would like them to subgrant. They would like subcontractors identified since it will help DEEP identify how robust the RFQ should be.

Ebone asked if subgrants will only be to 501(c)(3) and nonprofits? Andrew Hoskins and Annie Decker said that would be a thing they would need to consider.

Next Steps

Sarah Huang shared how comments on the draft RFQ are due Monday November 18th via email to deep.ej@ct.gov She also encouraged participants to [RSVP](#) and join Office Hours next week (Nov 12-15; 12-1pm):

- 11/12 - Scope of Service
- 11/13 - Funding and Contracts
- 11/14 - Eligibility and Partnerships
- 11/15 – Submissions and Evaluations

Joseph Dickerson pointed out how there is another virtual session today, Thursday, November 7th from 6-7:30pm EDT, following the format of this morning meeting. The RSVP link was put in the chat: <https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMude-sqDwjGNSqlouTCYDC6GtgsIC4ESoX>

Meeting Adjourned: (10:30 AM)

Full List of Registrants:

Doris Johnson
Tracy Babbidge
Eliza Heins
Ted Novicki
Timothy Hunter
Andrew Ely
Brenda Watson

Jelani Fletcher
Laura Willson
Mark Mitchell MD
Linda Iovanna
William Rees
Lynne Bonnett
Cally Guasti

Bill Giannetto
Edgardo Mejias
Gabriel DiFelici
Louisa Barton
Kathleen Young
Harrison Nantz
Eric Hammerling

Caitlin Daddona
Johanna Castilla
shawn O'Sullivan
Christy Duffy
Diane Nadeau
Stefanie Breitung Duffy
Ebony Lockett
Eric Russo
Margaret Broughton
Kathy Fay
Katherine Bennett
Aaron Goode
Terry Stringer
Jett Jonelis
Frederic De Pourcq
kamora herrington
Nasha Rhone
Audrey Berry

Maybeth Morales-Davis
Mary Buchanan
Cora Barber
Caprice Taylor
Rebecca Andreucci
kelvin Ayala
Jordana Graveley
Evan Volkin
Anstress Farwell
Alyssa Peterson
Nicole Govert
Phillips Health Ministry
Mercedes Ptpartners
Evelyn Green
Doreen Abubakar
KELLY KIRKLEY-BEY
Jon Rulkowski
Vicki Hackett (she/her)

Andrew Hoskins
Annie Decker
Peggy Diaz
Joseph Dickerson (He/Him) -
CT DEEP
Paul Steinmetz
Danielle Russell
Jocelyn Ault - PT Partners
Jennifer Perry
Jacquelyn Torres
Angela
Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig
Sonserae Cicero
Katie Dykes
Black Business Alliance
Patricia Kelly